



Musical Tribute For Guruji



The evening of June 30 saw a nice turnout of CMLA members from the various centers at Rameshwaram to celebrate the birthday of Guruji Swami Tejomayananda. It was a

gathering of people who wanted to honor and remember with gratitude all that Guruji has been doing for the Mission and for the society at large.

The Swaranjali and Shruti group of singers, expressed it well for CMLA members, with their carefully selected bhajans. In the presence of Swami Ishwarananda who had aptly decided on a melodic tribute for Guruji - a great lover of music - and Acharya Mahadevji, Swaranjali presented lyrical and musical compositions of Guruji including 'Krishna Krishna Vasudeva,' 'Sada Shankaram' and Sant Tulsidas's 'Mangala Moorti,' in raag Madhuvanti, among others. Young ones of the Shruti group, followed with energetic numbers expressing the guru bhakti bhaava.

A short video in which Smt. Pramodini Rao, Director at Chinmaya Naada Bindu, sings about Guruji was also played on the occasion. The event closed with 'Janmadinamidam' and arati.

Children Enjoy 'Young Gita Camp'



Q: Why do we need animals?

A: They give food.

A: They make the world diverse.

Q: How are animals different from us?

A: We can think.

Another answer: They have tails and can't wear earrings.

From the smart to the comic, children from grades 1 through 8 took on and jovially parried questions from Swamiji, Mahadevji and Viji Mahadev at the 'Young Gita Camp' held in Rameshwaram from June 27-July 1.

Conducted in an informal atmosphere, the children interacted with the acharyas gleefully free of inhibitions. The casual setting however did nothing to detract from the syllabus at hand, with kids engaging in serious discussions, doing practical stuff like dropping pennies in clear and sullied water to understand the gunas, chanting slokas and verses from the Gita, listening to stories including of course the magnificence of Lord Krishna, and taking on art projects.

Children were asked to bring sack lunches and were supervised by volunteers and overseen by Swamiji who even made



random checks to see that they had indeed eaten!

It was an enjoyable sight to see children have the run of the place and feel at home in Rameshwaram, where even the main hall became a place to gather and play games like 'kho-kho'! Youth volunteers conducted the games and were always ready with a smile and a hug for the kids. Volunteers were key to the success of the camp and Priya Raghuram and others worked hard to make the camp most enjoyable and memorable for the children.

Students Say Goodbye to 2010-2011

The month of June saw a spate of graduation ceremonies at CMLA. Students at Rameshwaram and the satellite centers - San Gabriel, Redlands, the Valley area, Brea, Agoura Hills and the South Bay - presented what they had learned in the year of instruction, to the entire assembled congregation in their respective locations. Student reps from each grade summed up the year in verse or speech and thanked their teachers. At some centers, children presented skits, songs and dance items related to the year's class material. Values from the Gita, the splendor of Lord Rama and Shiva, among others, were all described and detailed by the students.

Rameshwaram was also witness to the ceremonies for the youngest graduates from the CEEP program and the oldest from the 12th grade who were simultaneously initiated into the Chinmaya Yuva Kendra. The little ones charmed and brought smiles to the faces of parents and others present. The youth were more sentimental given that they were headed off to college and balavihar



would no more be a regular Sunday occurrence for them. Swamiji and Mahadevji each exhorted them to internalize their learning and apply it to their daily lives.

The next BV session resumes in September, after the summer break.

Mahadevji Speaks on the Facets of Bhakti



On the weekend of June 18 and 19, the yoga of bhakti was profoundly elucidated and understood, when Acharya Mahadevji spoke on the subject at the Siddhi Vinayak temple where CM's Brea center members gather.



Interspersing his discourses with some delightful bhajans, Mahadevji began on the first day by simply explaining the concept in a talk titled 'Understanding the Roadmap of Bhakti.' He spoke of the various bhaavas through which bhakti manifests, gave details and examples from great devotional scriptures like the 'Srimad Bhagavatam' and 'RamcharitaManas' and finally, on what the pinnacle of bhakti can beget.

The following day, Mahadevji embarked on his talk 'Driving on the Road of Bhakti,' by explaining on what makes a bhakta, the use of prayer, shraddha and what a guru can do for the true seeker. At the end of the discourse, there was little that a lay person would not have understood about the path of bhakti, and seekers would have only been more firmly resolved on their journey toward god.

Mahadevji will speak on the same subject on July 16 -17 from 4-5:30 pm at the Shirdi Sai Baba Temple at Montebello.

Sw. Sharanananda Visits Valley BV



Swami Sharanananda, Acharya of Chinmaya Mission Chicago, visited the Southland and spoke to CMLA members in the San Fernando Valley on Sunday, June 12. In his gentle style, he spoke and explained in simple terms the 'Value of Gayatri Mantra.' He pointed out that in the Gayatri the supplicant asks the lord to guide the intellect in the right direction and that its recitation would empower the seeker.

Kids Volunteer at Food Bank



A small group of 6th grade children from the morning session at Rameshwaram volunteered at the Orange County Food Bank in Garden Grove on May 21. The kids worked in groups and were asked to bag oranges and potatoes that was to be distributed to those who can ill afford the produce. The children were given a certificate of participation, but as Khush Attal said, "I was given a certificate, but also something else. I was given a chance to put a smile on a kid's face. I hope to be able to have this experience again, and I also hope more people will join this program to help."

Pathways to Peace: Peace For All

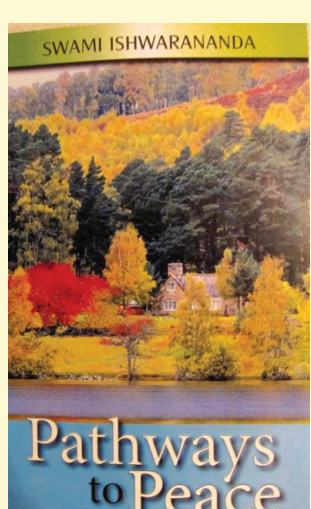
After telling the reader how to turn inward, knowing where to look for peace, giving tips to control that most difficult of all - the mind - and urging the curtailing and renunciation of the ego, Swami Ishwarananda in the fifth and final chapter 'Peace for All' in his book 'Pathways to Peace', summarizes it all by pointing out that the journey can be undertaken by each and everyone, as peace is not the exclusive domain of scholars or the erudite alone.

Seeing the Lord in Oneself, and experiencing with regular practice, the kind of quiet that one feels in front of a deity at a temple, will encourage the dissolving of differences between the self and the universal.

Swamiji points out that whether jnana or bhakti is the chosen path, each if done with focus and absolute sincerity can guarantee glimpses of peace at first. Having tasted the bliss of it, he says, it is bound to encourage us to keep pushing forward toward the ultimate.

Don't succumb, he cautions, to mere reading. Don't indulge in mere religious dogma. But be a true seeker, a true devotee. And, promises Swamiji, peace is ours.

For more: 'Pathways to Peace,' by Swami Ishwarananda, \$4, @Chinmaya Rameshwaram bookstore.



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